

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

been already mentioned), Spinello rose in arms, harried the lands of the Salimbeni, and renewed the fierce factions of the two houses.

For more than four months Catherine remained in these parts, making Rocca d' Orcia her headquarters. No traces of this once famous castle remain to-day. It stood on an eminence above the Orcia, some twenty-three miles from Siena on the way to Rome, between Montepulciano and Montalcino, and (like so many similar *castelli* that we still see in southern Tuscany and in the Roman Campagna) was practically a small town centred round the great fortress of the feudal lord. It was also known as the "Isola della Rocca," apparently from its isolated position. Here, the pacific work for which they had come being accomplished, Madonna Biancina showed herself the most loving and devoted of hostesses to Catherine and her followers, while men and women poured in from the hills and country round, to hear the Saint's words and be healed of their maladies. Wonderful stories are told us by Fra Raimondo and by Francesco Malavolti of her power in casting out demons from the bodies of the possessed,¹ but even more remarkable were the conversions that she effected in men's souls. "I sometimes saw," writes Fra Raimondo, "a thousand or more persons, men and women, come together from the mountains and other regions of the Sienese contado, to see and hear Catherine, as it were summoned by an invisible trumpet; and there, not only by her words, but at the mere sight of her, they were straightway moved to compunction for their misdeeds; weeping and bewailing their sins, they hastened to the confessors, of whom I was one, and made their confessions with such great contrition that no one could doubt that a great abundance of grace had descended from heaven into their hearts."²

Eating souls, or devouring demons, was Catherine's playful term for converting sinners.

"We must work for the honour

¹ *Legenda*, II. ix. 7-9 (§§ 274-276); *Contestatio Francisci de Malavoltis*, cap. iv., MS *cit.*, pp. 446-453. Cf. Augusta Drane, II. pp. 61-66. ² *Ibid.*, II. vii. 21-22 (§§239, 240). Cf. *Processus*, col. 1271.